<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Anishinaabemowin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita mi ritrovar per una selva oscura, ché la diritta via era smarrita.</td>
<td>When I had journeyed half of our life’s way, I found myself within a shadowed forest, for I had lost the path that does not stray.</td>
<td>Epilichi naawi-gibabaamadizimin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahì quanto a dir qual era cosa dura esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte che nel pensier rinova la paura!</td>
<td>Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, that savage forest, dense and difficult, which even in recall renews my fear: so bitter-death is hardly more severe! But to retell the good discovered there, I’ll also tell the other things I saw.</td>
<td>Ningi-waawenim niin dibiki-naawaakwaaw Onji-gwayakoshkaa gi-giyayaan gi-wanisiin-ayaan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tant’è amara che poco è più morte; ma per trattar del ben ch’il vi trovai, dirò de l’altre cose ch’il v’ho scorto.</td>
<td>Epilichi naawi-gibabaamadizimin</td>
<td>Howah, aanii niizhi maskkawaa? Anaan niin gi-waawediiaawkwaaw miin bagow gaawna waawnaa maskkawaa miish gi-maaminonaden gi-giizhiitoona niizosa Oshki-miis naawnaa niizosaan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Io non so ben ridir com’i’ v’intrai, tant’era pien di sonno a quel punto che la verace via abbandonai.</td>
<td>I cannot clearly say how I had entered the wood; I was so full of sleep just at the point where I abandoned the true path.</td>
<td>Aapii wisiigan a’aw gi-niibozi ayaa gaagasan!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ma poi ch’il fu ai piè d’un colle giunto, là dove terminava quella valle che m’avea di paura il cor compunto, Guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle vestite già de’ raggi del pianeta che mena dritto altrui per ogne calle.</td>
<td>But when I’d reached the bottom of a hill — it rose along the boundary of the valley that had harassed my heart with so much fear — I looked on high and I saw its shoulders clothed already that beast before me with his speckled skin; so that the hour and the gentle season which serves to lead men straight along all roads.</td>
<td>Idash izhi-babaalkido mingo-gegoo gi-niisawenim imaa Nidibadadan nawan gego wiijii ningii-wabaamaan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allor fu la paura un poco queta, che nel lago del cor m’era durata la notte ch’il passai con tanta pieta.</td>
<td>At this my fear was somewhat quieted, for through the night of sorrow I had spent, the lake within my heart felt terror present.</td>
<td>Niin gaaw-gaawi gii geget idan aanii niizhi ningii-biindige imaa, Miin Ningi-boozaangwaam a’aw imaay aayaa aanii aapi ningi-nagadnan akeyaa izhi-debwe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E come quei che con lena affannata, uscito fuor del pelago a la riva, si volge a l’acqua perigliosa e guata, così l’animo mio, ch’ancor fuggiva, si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo che non lasciò già mai persona viva.</td>
<td>And just as he who, with exhausted breath, having escaped from sea to shore, turns back to watch the dangerous waters he has quit, So did my spirit, still a fugitive, turn back to look intently at the pass that never has let any man survive.</td>
<td>Idash aanii aapi Ningi-giyaan gi-oidtan maaji-bikwadiinaa aandi gii-ishkwe-ayyaa’ii basadina a’aw gi-giyaan gi-baziba’aan niin gide’ wiibi-giyan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poi ch’il posato un poco il corpo lasso, ripresi via per la piaggia diserta, si che ‘l piè fermo sempre era ‘l più basso.</td>
<td>I let my tired body rest awhile. Moving again, I tried the lonely slope—my firm foot always was the one below.</td>
<td>Ningii-ganaawabi iship-giishigkwaan gaawnaa ningii-wabaamaan odinimaagan zigigwaaw gaaweypaapizoo onji-aki a’aw gi-niligigaagi-nigwayka boozo akina milkaan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l’erta, una lonza leggera e presta molto, che di pel macolato era corveta; e non mi si partiva dinanzi al volto, anzi ‘impediva tanto il mio cammino, ch’il fu per ritornar più volte volto.</td>
<td>And almost where the hillside starts to rise— Look there! — a leopard, very quick and lithe, a leopard covered with a spotted hide.</td>
<td>Aapi goti gii-bangese wild-blinde zaaga’iigan niin gide’ ningi-niibaan-zhaabwe aaniwii gichi-wisiangendam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp’era dal principio del mattino, e ‘l sol montava ‘n sù con quelle stelle che’ran con lui quando l’amor divino mosse di prima quelle cose belle; si ch’a bene sperar m’era cagione di quella fiera a la gaetta pelle</td>
<td>The time was the beginning of the morning; the sun was rising now in fellowship with the same stars that had escorted it when Divine Love first moved those things of beauty; so that the hour and the gentle season gave me good cause on seeing that beast before me with his speckled skin; but hope was hardly able to prevent the fear I felt when I beheld a lion.</td>
<td>Miinawaa dibishkoo bezhi wiibii-akwaaanong ningii-zaaga-niib naawnaa ningi-awwitaaw/Awewen geshigii gii-gii naawnaa ningii gaawnaaang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l’ora del tempo e la dolce stagione; ma non sì che paura non mi desse la vista che m’apparve d’un leone.</td>
<td>His head held high and ravenous with hunger—even the air around him seemed to shudder—this lion seemed to make his way against me.</td>
<td>Miin nigiiudi wiiyaya-giishi gaawnaaang gaawnaa gii-gii gii-qi-naanigan aaw giwii waamaan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
seme la sua magrezza,
e molte genti fé già vivere grame,
questa mi porsene tanto di graveza
con la paura ch’uscia di sua vista,
ch’io perdeil la speranza de l’alteza.
E qual è quei che volontieri acquista,
e giunge ’l tempo che perder lo face,
che ’n tutti suoi pensier piange e
s’attrista;
tal mi fece la bestia sanza pace,
che, venendomi ’ncontro, a poco a poco
mi ripigneva là dove ’l sol tace.
Mentre ch’i’ rovinava in basso loco,
dinanzi a li occhi mi si fu offerto
chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco.
Quando vidi costui nel gran diserto,
"Miserere di me", gridai a lui,
"qual che tu siil, od ombra od omo certo"!
Rispuosemi: "Non omo, omo già fui,
e li parenti miei furon Lombardi,
mantoani per patria ambedui.
Nacqui sub Iulio, ancor che fosse tardi,
e vissi a Roma sotto ’l buono Augusto
nel tempo de li déi falsi e bugiardi.
Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto
figliuol d’Anchise che venne di Troia,
poi che ’l superbo Ilïón fu combusto.
Ma tu perché ritorni a tanta noia?
perché non sali il dilettoso monte
ch’è principio e cagion di tutta gioia?".
"Or se’ tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte
che spandi di parlar sì largo fiume?",
risuop’io lui con vergognosa fronte.
"O de li altri poeti onore e lume,
vagliami ’l lungo studio e ’l grande
amore che m’ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu se’ lo mio maestro e ’l mio autore,
tu se’ solo colui da cu’ io tolsi
lo bello stilo che m’ha fatto onore.
Vedi la bestia per cu’ io mi volsi;
aiutami da lei, famoso saggio,
ch’ella mi fa tremar le vene e l’polsi".
"A te convien tenere altro viaggio",
risuop, poi che lagrimer mi vide,
"se vuol campar d’esto loco selvaggio;
ché questa bestia, per la qual tu gride,
non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,
ma tanto lo ’medisce che l’uccide;
e ha natura si malvagia e ria,
che mai non empe la bramosa voglia,
e dopo ’l pasto ha più fame che prii.
And then a she-wolf showed herself; she
seemed to carry every craving in her leanness;
she had already brought despair to many.
The very sight of her so weighted me
with fearfulness that I abandoned hope
of ever climbing up that mountain slope.
Even as he who glories while he gains
will, when the time has come to tally loss,
lament with every thought and turn
despondent,
so was I when I faced that restless beast,
which, even as she stalked me, step by step
had thrust me back to where the sun is
speechless.
While I retreated down to lower ground,
before my eyes there suddenly appeared
one who seemed faint because of the long
silence.
When I saw him in that vast wilderness,
"Have pity on me," were the words I cried,
"whatever you may be- a shade, a man."
He answered me: "Not man; I once was man.
Both of my parents came from Lombardy,
and both claimed Mantua as native city.
And I was born, though late, sub julio,
and lived in Rome under the good Augustus-
the season of the false and lying gods.
I was a poet, and I sang the righteous
son of Anchises who had come from Troy
when flames destroyed the pride of Ilium.
But why do you return to wretchedness?
Why not climb up the mountain of delight,
the origin and cause of every joy?"
"And are you then that Virgil, you the fountain
that freely pours so rich a stream of speech?"
I answered him with shame upon my brow.
"O light and honour of all other poets,
may my long study and the intense love
that made me search your volume serve me
now.
You are my master and my author, you-
the only one from whom my writing drew
the noble style for which I had been honored.
You see the beast that made me turn aside;
help me, o famous sage, to stand against her,
for she has made my blood and pulses
shudder."
"It is another path that you must take," he answered when he saw my tearfulness,
"if you would leave this savage wilderness;
the beast that is the cause of your outcry
allows no man to pass along her track,
but blocks him even to the point of death;
her nature is so squalid, so malicious
that she can never sate her greedy will;
when she has fed, she's hungrier than ever.
Molti son li animali a cui s'ammoglia, e più saranno ancora, infin che l'vetro verrà, che la farà morir con doglia.

Questi non ciberà terra né pettro, ma sapienza, amore e virtute, e sua nazion sarà tra faeto e feltro.

Di quella umile Italia fa salute per cui morì la vergine Cammilla, Eurialo e Turno e Niso di ferute.

Questi la caccerà per ogne villa, fin che l'avrà rimessa ne lo 'nferno, là onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.

Ond'io per lo tuo me' penso e discerno che tu mi seguì, e io sarò tua guida, e trarròti di qui per loco eterno;

ove udilae le dispenser strida, vedrai li antichi spiriti dolenti, ch'a la seconda morte ciascun grida;

e vederai color che sono contenti nel foco, perché speran di venire quando che sia a le beate genti.

A le quai poi se tu vorrai salir, anima fia a ciò più di me degna: con lei l'asserò nel mio partire,

ch'èl quell imperador che là sù regna, perci'fui' ribellante a la sua legge, che quello imperador che là sù regna,

in tutte parti impera e quivi regge; ch'io fugga per quello Dio che tu non conoscesti,

vedrai li antichi spiriti dolenti, dove udirai le disperate strida, trarrotti di qui per loco etterno;

che tu mi segui, e io sarò tua guida, ondo' io per lo tuo me'

la qua poi se tu vorrai salir, anima fia a ciò più di me degna: con lei l'asserò nel mio partire,

quando che sia a le beate genti.

Then he set out, and I moved on behind him.

That Hound will never feed on land or pewter, but find his fare in wisdom, love, and virtue; his place of birth shall be between two felts.

He will restore low-lying Italy for which the maid Camilla died of wounds, and Nisu, Turnus and Euryalus.

And he will hunt that beast through every city until he thrusts her back again to Hell, from which she was first sent above by envy.

Therefore, I think and judge it best for you to follow me, and I shall guide you, taking you from this place through an eternal place, where you shall hear the howls of desperation and see the ancient spirits in their pain, as each of them laments his second death; and shall see those souls who are content within the fire, for they hope to reach-whenever that may be-to the blessed people.

If you would then ascend as high as these, a soul more worthy than I am will guide you; I'll leave you in her care when I depart, because that Emperor who reigns above, since I have been rebellious rebellious to His law, will not allow me entry to His city.

He governs everywhere, but rules from there; there is His city, His high capital:

o happy those He chooses to be there!

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Credits

Italian: D. Alighieri, La Commedia secondo l’antico vulgato, ed. by G. Petrocchi (Florence, 1994) from the website www.danteonline.it by the Società dantesca italiana.


Anishinaabemowin: the first 30 verses were translated by Matthias Nunno, a self-taught novice speaker of Anishinaabemowin, of which there are many dialects and regional variations of speech. Matthias “would like to acknowledge and express his thanks to his family, and all those involved informally in the Anishinaabemowin Aabaakaawin Maamajise/Anishabek language revitalization movement.”

Commemorating the 700th anniversary of the death of Dante Alighieri, Toronto Salutes Dante features more than thirty Canadian-based guests who read Dante’s Inferno in various languages, several for the first time. In addition to ten different Italian dialects, there are represented American Sign Language, Anishinaabemowin, Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Farsi, French, German, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese, Québécois, Russian, Sanskrit, Slovak, Spanish, Stoney Nakoda, Swedish, Thai, and Ukrainian. In 15-minute clips, well-known personalities of Canadian public and cultural life, professors, and students at the University of Toronto, and members of the Italian-Canadian community share their voices and fresh memories of the most important Italian author in world literature. Listen to Dante’s Inferno as you have never heard it before on the Department of Italian Studies’ Youtube channel from March 25th to June 21.

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